

February 19, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building

**RE: Support – HB1127- Sexual Assault Forensic Examinations Conducted Through Telehealth-
Reimbursement and Study**

Dear Chair Clippinger and Committee Members,

I am a nurse practitioner serving as the Clinical Director of the Forensic Medical Unit at Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center and a member of the Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee. One reason Marylanders experience barriers to accessing sexual assault medical forensic examinations (SAMFEs) is a shortage of forensic nurse examiners to provide care.¹ Telehealth (including providing SAMFEs) is a growing method employed to increase access to direct patient care and professional mentorship to support less experienced clinicians.²

Telehealth is a promising option for increasing SAMFE access in Maryland. However, a feasibility study aimed at examining the unique needs of the community and a description of the infrastructure necessary for the successful development and implementation of a Maryland TeleSAFE Pilot is essential to ensuring Marylanders receive world-class quality medical care after sexual assault.

For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report for Maryland HB 1127.

Respectfully,



Jessica M. Volz DNP, CRNP, FNE A/P, FNP-BC, NE-BC, AFN-C, SANE-A, SANE-P, DM-AFN
Clinical Director of Forensics, Forensic Medical Unit



References

1. Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Policy and Funding Committee. *SAEK Committee 2024 Sixth Annual Report*. 2024.
https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/Groups/2024_SAEK_Committee_Annual_Report.pdf
2. Miyamoto S, Thiede E, Dorn L, Perkins DF, Bittner C, Scanlon D. The Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Telehealth (SAFE-T) Center: A Comprehensive, Nurse-led Telehealth Model to Address Disparities in Sexual Assault Care. *The Journal of Rural Health*. 2021;37(1):92-102. doi:10.1111/jrh.12474

